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Police-reported Crime in Inuit Nunangat

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0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

0s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded

p preliminary

r revised

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Table of contents

Acknowledgments 4

Police-reported Crime in Inuit Nunangat

1 Introduction 5
2 Crime among Inuit and Aboriginal people of Canada 6
3 Results 6
4 Conclusion 12
5 Data sources and methodology 13
6 Bibliography 15

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Police-reported Crime in Inuit Nunangat

by Mathieu Charron (Statistics Canada), Christopher Penney (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) and Sacha Senécal (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)

1 Introduction

Recent history has brought Inuit communities face to face with particular challenges in terms of health (Wilkins et al. 2008), education, employment, income, and demography (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Research and Analysis Directorate 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, and 2007b). As is the case for many other Aboriginal peoples around the world (Capobianco and Shaw 2003), many studies suggests that Inuit communities also face high crime rates (Wood 1997; Clairmont 2002; Brzozowski et al. 2006; Chartrand and McKay 2006; Pauktuutit 2006; Mancini Billson 2006; Paletta 2008).

Inuit are one of three Aboriginal groups, defined in the *Constitution Act* of 1982, the other two being First Nations and Métis. Inuit are distinct from these two other groups, with their own unique history, language and culture.

Inuit have lived in the northern region of what is now called Canada for more than 5,000 years. Until relatively recently, they lived a nomadic lifestyle of hunting and fishing. Over the past few generations, Inuit life and culture have seen an accelerated transition from a traditional economy into permanent settlements. Although Inuit have largely shifted to Western social structures, such as an economy based on wages and formal education, some Inuit alive today were born on the land and lived a traditional nomadic lifestyle for the first part of their lives.

According to the 2006 Census, 50,485 Inuit live in Canada. Of these, 39,475, or 78%, live in one of the four settled Inuit land-claims regions, known collectively as Inuit Nunangat, or "the place where Inuit live." The Inuit population is young, with a median age of 22 years, compared with 40 years for the non-Aboriginal population. More than half of Inuit (56%) were aged 24 or under in 2006; among the non-Aboriginal population, less than one-third (31%) were 24 or younger (Statistics Canada 2008).

A number of studies have shown that criminal incidents are not distributed evenly across Canada, but are more prevalent in certain provinces, territories, metropolitan areas (Wallace 2009), regions (Francisco and Chénier 2007) and neighbourhoods (Savoie 2008).

This is an exploratory study seeking to determine whether it is possible to measure police-reported crime for Inuit Nunangat, in the absence of Inuit-specific crime data. Since there is no reliable and complete information on the Aboriginal identity of the victims or perpetrators of crime (Kong and Beattie 2005), the current study is based on a geographical approach as a proxy for Inuit-specific information. In addition, we compare crime rates for communities based on alcohol restrictions. We look at some socio-economic indicators, but we do not fully explore the relationships between these indicators and crime patterns in the present study.

The study focuses on communities where the Inuit live, rather than on individual Inuit. That is, it focuses on communities where more than 33% of the population self-identified as Inuit in the 2006 Census (Wilkins et al. 2008). All of these communities are part of the Inuit Nunangat, a vast territory that extends from Labrador to the Northwest Territories (Map 1).

The data in this report are from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR 2.2). These data are reported by police. Many criminal incidents do not come to the attention of the police, thus, the UCR data provide only a partial picture of total crime. In addition, Inuit are less likely than other Canadians to report incidents of

victimization to the police because they fear their community's reaction (Pauktuutit 2006) and because they lack confidence in the justice system (Chartrand and McKay 2006).

Other information comes from the 2006 Census of Population and the Homicide Survey. Finally, some Inuit Nunangat communities are excluded from parts of the analysis because data are unavailable. In particular, Inuit-inhabited communities of Nunavik are excluded from the analysis of the police-reported data (see the Data sources and methodology section for more details).

2 Crime among Inuit and Aboriginal people of Canada

The over-representation of Aboriginal people in Canada's correctional services has been well documented (Brzozowski et al. 2006; Perreault 2009). In this study, Aboriginal people include members of First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Several studies have also shown that Aboriginal people are more often victims of crime (Brzozowski et al. 2006; Chartrand and McKay 2006), although the data are not as complete.

In Canada, 40% of Aboriginal people reported that they were victims of a crime in 2004, compared with only 28% of non-Aboriginal people (Brzozowski et al. 2006). The gap is even greater among victims of spousal violence: 21% of Aboriginal people reported being victims of spousal violence in 2004, compared with 6% for non-Aboriginal people.

Other studies suggest that Aboriginal people who live in cities are also at a greater risk of becoming victims or being accused of criminal incidents (La Prairie 2002).

Although fewer in number and focussed on specific aspects of the question, some studies have looked more specifically at certain Inuit communities (Clairmont 2002; Mancini Billson 2006; Pauktuutit 2006). Despite varying approaches, these studies have indicated that the current level of violence in Inuit communities is a concern.

By interviewing many people in Inuit communities in Labrador, Clairmont (2002) showed that crime, and in particular violent crime, was very high in those communities.

Mancini Billson (2006) interviewed Inuit from different generations and came to the conclusion that the current levels of domestic violence are higher than they were during the hunter-gatherer era. It should be noted that Inuit communities have been undergoing significant changes since the mid-20th century. In the 1960s, they moved from a nomadic lifestyle based on hunting and fishing to a sedentary way of life, living in permanent villages (Mancini Billson 2006).

3 Results

From 2006 to 2008, police services reported nearly 45,000 criminal incidents in Inuit Nunangat included in this analysis. Out of this number, more than 10,000 incidents were violent crimes. (Communities from Nunavik are not included in results based on police-reported data. See the Data sources and methodology section for more details on excluded communities.)

Police-reported data show that the overall crime rate is six times higher in Inuit Nunangat than in the rest of Canada (Table 1). In those communities, there was around 1 police-reported incident for every 2.5 residents; in the rest of the country, the proportion was 1 incident for every 17 residents.

Table 1
Crime in Inuit Nunangat and in the rest of Canada, 2006 to 2008

	Inuit Nunangat	Rest of territories [1]	Rest of Canada [2]	Inuit Nunangat	Rest of territories [1]	Rest of Canada [2]
	number (2006 to 2008)			rate per 1,000 population (annual average)		
Total - all violations	**44,845**	**62,633**	**5,880,026**	**380**	**298**	**60**
Total violent incidents	**10,602**	**11,368**	**1,017,906**	**90**	**54**	**10**
Homicide and attempted murder [3, 4]	30	15	3,607	0.3	0.1	0.0
Sexual assault [3,5]	889	649	62,786	8	3	1
Major assault [3]	1,430	1,388	141,780	12	7	1
Common assault [3]	6,704	6,793	453,242	57	32	5
Robbery [3]	54	110	83,717	0.5	0.5	0.9
Uttering threats [3]	1,915	2,251	235,040	16	11	2
Total non-violent incidents [6]	**34,243**	**51,265**	**4,862,120**	**290**	**244**	**49**
Breaking and entering [3]	2,902	3,308	641,005	25	16	7
Theft [3, 7]	2,949	6,594	2,182,362	25	31	22
Mischief [3]	16,050	20,061	1,071,941	136	95	11
Disturb the peace [3]	9,333	16,527	254,760	79	79	3

1 Includes all police services of the territories, with the exception of police services that serve Inuit Nunangat.
2 Excludes Inuit Nunangat and police services of the territories.
3 Includes incidents having at least one violation of that type.
4 Includes attempted murder and conspiracy to commit murder.
5 Includes sexual assault levels 1, 2, and 3, as well as other sexual offences.
6 Includes only incidents where the most serious violation is non-violent.
7 Includes motor vehicle theft, theft from a vehicle and other thefts.
Note(s): The community of Rigolet, Newfoundland and Labrador, and all communities in Nunavik, Quebec, are excluded from Inuit Nunangat because of police-reported data limitations.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 2006 to 2008.

The violent crime rates in Inuit Nunangat were even higher—nine times higher—than the rates in the rest of Canada. The gap was particularly significant for the rates of sexual assault and common assault, both of which were 12 times higher.

The non-violent crime rates were six times higher in Inuit Nunangat. Rates of mischief and disturbing the peace[1] were also significantly higher than in the rest of Canada.

Crime rates in Inuit Nunangat were also high compared with other communities of the territories. In fact, the rates of sexual assault and assaults (both common and major) were twice as high. Only theft and robbery rates were lower in Inuit Nunangat.

3.1 Possible factors associated with high crime rates

Many characteristics of Aboriginal communities may partly explain their high crime rates. Although it is difficult to determine precise causal mechanisms (Wood 1997; Clairmont 2002; Mancini Billson 2006), most of the studies that have examined this question tend to suggest that the difficulties with crime in Aboriginal communities is attributable to a series of historical and social factors, such as poverty, alcoholism, low education levels and the consequences of colonization (Canadian Criminal Justice Association 2000; Capobianco and Shaw 2003).

The mechanisms that link these factors to crime are probably too complex to be analyzed with available data. Nevertheless, the eventual associations between crime and socio-economic factors, demographic factors and alcohol are presented in the next sections to foster discussion.

1 Causing a disturbance in a public place, being intoxicated in public, hindering others, etc.

3.2 Socio-economic factors

The Aboriginal populations of Canada have several characteristics that have been associated with crime: high proportions of youth, people with limited education, unemployed, low-income households, single-parent families, and crowded dwellings (Brzozowski et al. 2006; Gionet 2009; Perreault 2009).

These characteristics also apply to the Inuit Nunangat communities in this study. These communities are demographically quite distinct from the rest of Canada (Table 2). Close to one-third (32%) of their population is made up of youth under the age of 15, while that proportion is only 18% in the rest of the country. Only 1 out of 7 adults (15%) has a university diploma, and nearly half (45%) have not completed secondary school. Housing in Inuit Nunangat is significantly more crowded than elsewhere in the country and more than 1 in 5 dwellings (21%) requires major repairs.

Table 2
Comparison of socio-economic characteristics between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada, 2006

	Inuit Nunangat	Rest of territories [1]	Rest of Canada [2]
	percentage		
Children (under 15 years old)	32	21	18
Seniors (65 years and over)	3	6	14
University graduates [3]	15	24	25
No high school diploma [3]	45	21	20
Dwellings in need of major repairs	21	16	7
Living in crowded dwellings [4]	30	8	5

1 Includes all police services of the territories, with the exception of police services that serve Inuit Nunangat.
2 Excludes Inuit Nunangat and police services of the territories.
3 Population aged 25 and over.
4 Dwellings having more than one person per room.
Note(s): The community of Rigolet, Newfoundland and Labrador, and all communities in Nunavik, Quebec, are excluded from Inuit Nunangat because of police-reported data limitations.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, 2006 Census.

Many authors consider that these unfavourable conditions are the consequence of the social and cultural shift that Aboriginal communities (including Inuit communities) have undergone since colonization (Wood 1997; Canadian Criminal Justice Association 2000; Clairmont 2002; Chartrand and McKay 2006; Mancini Billson 2006; Paletta 2008). This situation is also believed to affect Aboriginal populations in other countries (Capobianco and Shaw 2003). Significant changes occurred in Inuit communities in the 1960s. Settlement into permanent communities and forced relocation have been followed by a loss of cultural references, rapid changes in social norms, economic dependence on the government and significant changes of various social roles of men and women (Mancini Billson 2006).

These major changes are believed to have had significant repercussions on the economic development and social organization of Inuit communities. A number of studies have shown a strong association between access to socio-economic resources and criminal behaviour, whether their focus was Aboriginal people (Capobianco and Shaw 2003) or residents of metropolitan areas (Savoie 2008).

The socio-economic context that prevails in Inuit Nunangat might partly explain its high crime rate when compared with the rest of Canada. However, when different regions within Inuit Nunangat are compared to each other, the associations between socio-economic context and criminal behaviour seem less evident (Table 3).

Table 3
Crime (2006 to 2008) and socio-economic characteristics of regions of Inuit Nunangat (2006)

	Nunavut [1]	Qikiqtaaluq	Kivalliq	Kitikmeot	Nunatsiavut	Inuvialuit
	number					
Number of communities	25	13	7	5	4	6
Population	29,440	15,760	8,345	5,335	1,870	5,760
	percentage					
Inuit	84	80	89	88	77	55
Children (under 15 years old)	34	33	37	35	22	26
Seniors (65 years and over)	3	2	3	4	7	5
University graduates [2]	15	17	12	11	16	16
No high school diploma [2]	48	44	55	50	35	36
Dwellings in need of major repairs	20	17	25	24	26	21
Living in crowded dwellings [3]	34	30	41	38	12	15
	rate per 1,000 population (annual average)					
Total - all violations	**312**	**382**	**176**	**375**	**640**	**642**
Total violent violations	**86**	**93**	**48**	**91**	**142**	**124**
Homicide and attempted murder [4, 5]	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.0
Sexual assault [4, 6]	7	8	4	7	19	7
Major assault [4]	11	14	8	9	17	14
Common assault [4]	50	56	31	62	93	78
Robbery [4]	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.6	0.9
Uttering threats [4]	15	19	9	13	16	23
Total non-violent violations [7]	**232**	**289**	**128**	**284**	**499**	**518**
Breaking and entering [4]	21	20	22	24	46	34
Theft [4, 8]	21	23	12	28	37	43
Mischief [4]	106	123	53	136	267	247
Disturbing the peace [4]	65	85	34	58	110	140

1 Includes Qikiqtaaluq, Kivalliq and Kitikmeot.
2 Population aged 25 and over.
3 Dwellings having more than one person per room.
4 Includes incidents having at least one violation of that type.
5 Includes attempted murder and conspiracy to commit murder.
6 Includes sexual assault levels 1, 2, and 3, as well as other sexual offences.
7 Includes only incidents where the most serious violation is non-violent.
8 Includes motor vehicle theft, theft from a vehicle and other thefts.
Note(s): The community of Rigolet, Newfoundland and Labrador, and all communities in Nunavik, Quebec, are excluded from Inuit Nunangat because of police-reported data limitations.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 2006 to 2008, and 2006 Census.

Despite some similarities, the Inuit regions are different in many ways. Inuit make up 55% of the population of Inuvialuit, but more than 75% of the population of the other regions. The socio-economic conditions seem to be more challenging in the Kivalliq and Kitikmeot regions, where the housing conditions are more difficult and the population is younger and generally less educated.

However, these two regions also have relatively low crime rates compared with the other Inuit regions. The regions with the highest crime rates, Nunatsiavut and the Inuvialuit region, have slightly older populations and higher levels of educational attainment.

There are significant differences in criminality within Inuit regions. For example, Iqaluit and Inuvik are the largest communities of Qikiqtaaluq and the Inuvialuit region, respectively. They are administrative centres, and non-Inuit represent a major share of their populations—42% in Iqaluit and 59% in Inuvik. These two communities are also characterized by high rates of non-violent incidents such as thefts, mischief and disturbing-the-peace incidents. The rest of Qikiqtaaluq and the Inuvialuit region have higher rates of violent crimes, though the patterns of specific crimes vary between the two regions.

3.3 Demographic factors

According to several researchers (Clairmont 2002; Mancini Billson 2006), the rapid shift from an economy based on hunting and fishing, in which men played clearly defined roles, to an economy of dependence on the central government has lowered Inuit self-esteem, particularly among young men, whose social role has become more ambiguous.

Police-reported data tend to show a more complex situation. Young men aged 15 to 29 make up one-third (33%) of the accused in Inuit Nunangat. The rate of persons accused is quite high for this age group, more than 4 accused for every 5 young men (Table 4). In fact, young men aged 15 to 29 have the highest rates of accused for all types of crime except threats and sexual assaults, whose rates are higher among men aged 30 to 44.

Table 4
Rate of accused persons by age group in Inuit Nunangat, 2006 to 2008, annual average

	All accused	Incidents with violence	Sexual assault [1,2]	Major assault [1]	Common assault [1]	Uttering threats [1]	Breaking and entering [1]	Mischief [1]	Disturb the peace [1]
	rate per 1,000 population								
Female									
15 to 29 years	429	103	1	14	73	14	13	167	103
30 to 44 years	370	76	1	12	47	14	6	167	92
45 to 59 years	166	25	1	3	16	5	1	64	43
60 years and over	97	9	0	1	5	2	1	49	34
Male									
15 to 29 years	839	255	18	38	155	43	61	259	158
30 to 44 years	692	210	23	31	137	49	28	244	136
45 to 59 years	370	94	10	12	59	16	6	159	86
60 years and over	248	31	6	4	17	5	3	95	102

1 Includes incidents having at least one violation of that type.
2 Includes sexual assault levels 1, 2, and 3, as well as other sexual offences.
Note(s): The community of Rigolet, Newfoundland and Labrador, and all communities in Nunavik, Quebec, are excluded from Inuit Nunangat because of police-reported data limitations.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 2006 to 2008.

The over-representation of men, and especially of young men, among persons accused is similar to what has been observed across the country (Vaillancourt 2010). However, overall, the rates of accused persons in Inuit Nunangat were 14 times higher than those in the rest of the country; for young men aged 15 to 29, they were 9 times higher.

All of the demographic groups in Inuit Nunangat had higher rates of persons accused than their counterparts in the rest of Canada. Young men aged 15 to 29 showed particularly high rates. However, women and people aged 30 and older had the highest relative rates compared with the rest of Canada (Table 5).

Table 5
Rate of accused persons in Inuit Nunangat and in the rest of Canada, 2006 to 2008, annual average

	Inuit Nunangat		Rest of Canada		Inuit Nunangat /Rest of Canada ratio	
	All accused	Accused in incidents with violence	All accused	Accused in incidents with violence	All accused	Accused in incidents with violence
	rate per 1,000 population				ratio	
Female						
15 to 29 years	428	103	29	8	15	12
30 to 44 years	370	79	15	5	24	16
45 to 59 years	195	25	9	2	29	15
60 years and over	97	9	1	0	93	31
Male						
15 to 29 years	839	235	98	28	9	8
30 to 44 years	682	219	52	18	13	12
45 to 59 years	370	94	22	9	17	11
60 years and over	248	31	5	2	48	14

Note(s): The community of Rigolet, Newfoundland and Labrador, and all communities in Nunavik, Quebec, are excluded from Inuit Nunangat because of police-reported data limitations.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 2006 to 2008.

As for the victims of violent crime, young women make up the demographic group at highest risk. More than half (51%) of the victims of police-reported violent incidents were women aged 15 to 44. The rates of violent victimization tended to be higher among women than men, especially for sexual assault and common assault (Table 6).

Table 6
Police-reported violent victimization rate by age group in Inuit Nunangat, 2006 to 2008, annual average

	All violent violations	Sexual assault [1,2]	Major assault [1]	Common assault [1]	Uttering threats [1]
	rate per 1,000 population				
Female					
0 to 14 years	34	15	2	14	2
15 to 29 years	217	23	22	150	13
30 to 44 years	157	9	10	109	14
45 to 59 years	66	4	7	44	7
60 years and over	41	3	5	24	7
Male					
0 to 14 years	28	4	3	18	2
15 to 29 years	90	2	10	53	9
30 to 44 years	95	1	21	51	13
45 to 59 years	63	0	12	39	7
60 years and over	46	1	7	29	9

1. Includes incidents having at least one violation of that type.
2. Includes sexual assault levels 1, 2, and 3, as well as other sexual offences.
Note(s): The community of Rigolet, Newfoundland and Labrador, and all communities in Nunavik, Quebec, are excluded from Inuit Nunangat because of police-reported data limitations.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 2006 to 2008.

According to police-reported data, women were eleven times more likely to be victims of violent crime in Inuit Nunangat (117 victimizations per 1,000 population compared with 11 per 1,000 in the rest of Canada). Men were six times more at risk (66 compared with 11 in the rest of Canada). Rate of violent victimization of women in Inuit Nunangat was close to twice that of men (117 versus 66). In the rest of Canada, the violent victimization rate of men was comparable with that of women (Vaillancourt 2010).

3.4 Alcohol regulation and crime in Inuit Nunangat

Although many authors have pointed out the difficulty of determining whether alcohol plays a direct or indirect role in crime, they consider that alcohol abuse is associated with crime in Inuit communities (Clairmont 2002; Mancini Billson 2006).

Little reliable data are available on alcohol intoxication among those accused in most criminal incidents. However, the Homicide Survey does include information on the use of alcohol or other substances by those accused of homicide. From 2000 to 2008, 63% of people accused of homicide across the country had used alcohol and 10% had used drugs but no alcohol. In Inuit Nunangat, 82% of those accused of homicide had used alcohol; 4% had used drugs but no alcohol.[2]

The presumed association between alcohol and violence has led some communities to prohibit alcohol within their jurisdictions (Davison et al., not published). The data show that communities of Inuit Nunangat that prohibit alcohol in their jurisdictions have crime rates that are significantly lower than those of 'open' communities, that is, those with no alcohol restrictions (Table 7). The most noticeable differences in crime rates were seen for the rates of mischief and disturbing the peace, which were five times lower in communities where alcohol was prohibited.

Table 7
Crime rate in Inuit Nunangat by alcohol regulation, 2006 to 2008, annual average

	Open communities	Prohibited communities
	number	
Population	13,224	7,449
	rate per 1,000 population	
Total - all violations	**585**	**154**
Total violent violations	**120**	**55**
Sexual assault [1, 2]	7	5
Major assault [1]	16	7
Common assault [1]	76	34
Uttering threats [1]	22	13
Total non-violent incidents [3]	**465**	**99**
Breaking and entering [1]	26	18
Theft [1, 4]	37	12
Mischief [1]	222	35
Disturb the peace [1]	141	26

1. Includes incidents having at least one violation of that type.
2. Includes sexual assault levels 1, 2, and 3, as well as other sexual offences.
3. Includes only incidents where the most serious violation is non-violent.
4. Includes motor vehicle theft, theft from a vehicle and other thefts.

Note(s): Based on communities of Nunavut and the Inuvialuit region where the presence of alcohol was either prohibited (7 communities) or totally unrestricted (7 communities).

Source(s): Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 2006 to 2008.

Nonetheless, the rates of all types of crime were significantly higher in Inuit communities where alcohol was prohibited than in Canada as a whole. In open Inuit communities, the overall crime rate was 10 times higher than the rate in the rest of Canada, the violent crime rate was 12 times higher, the rate of mischief was 20 times higher, and the rate of disturbing the peace was more than 50 times higher.

4 Conclusion

This study aims to explore the possibility of calculating crime rates for Inuit Nunangat. It was possible to obtain crime statistics for many Inuit communities in Canada but data quality and availability are not consistent across all regions.

2 These results exclude persons accused of homicide whose use of alcohol or drugs is unknown. In addition, these results include the Inuit communities of Quebec.

For two of four regions (Inuvialuit Region and Nunavut) we have complete data, but information is incomplete for Nunatsiavut and it was not possible to obtain reliable data for Nunavik. Crime patterns in Inuit communities not covered in this study might vary considerably from other national or regional rates, and the results presented here cannot be considered representative of these communities.

Nevertheless, the data on police-reported crime presented in this study show that crime is a significant challenge in Inuit Nunangat. Compared with the rest of the country, Inuit Nunangat has an overall crime rate that is six times higher and a violent crime rate that is nine times higher. Although various researchers have associated crime with the socio-economic context, cultural transition or the use of alcohol (Wood 1997; Clairmont 2002; Brzozowski et al. 2006; Chartrand and McKay 2006; Mancini Billson 2006; Paletta 2008), the analyses presented in this study do not allow causal assumptions between these factors and crime.

However, a comparison between communities within Inuit Nunangat shows notable variation between regions. The highest crime rates are in Nunatsiavut and the Inuvialuit regions. These two regions nonetheless provide better education opportunities and housing conditions. Further analyses are necessary to better understand why certain communities in Inuit Nunangat have higher crime rates than others.

The data presented in this document also show that the rates of accused persons and victimization rates vary according to age and sex. In Inuit Nunangat, rates of accused persons are very high for men aged 15 to 29, with more than four accused for every five young men. Compared with the rest of the country, all age groups show high rates of persons accused and victimization rates.

It appears that the factors contributing to elevated crime rates in Inuit Nunangat have an impact on all demographic groups. People 30 years and older have very high rates of persons accused compared with their counterparts in the rest of Canada. Further studies are needed to determine whether this result reflects a specific generational factor (since people aged 30 to 44 have had more contact with crime) or if it indicates that, in Inuit Nunangat, the period at which individuals are more at risk of adopting criminal behaviours is extending to later years.

Police-reported data also shed light on the high crime rates among women in Inuit Nunangat. They are in fact more likely than women elsewhere in Canada to be accused of a criminal offence. In addition, with more than one victimization for every ten women, the victimization rate was 12 times higher in Inuit Nunangat than in the rest of Canada.

Alcohol restrictions seem to be associated with the variations in the police-reported crime rates between communities Inuit Nunangat. In fact, the crime rates are significantly higher in open communities. The impact seems particularly noticeable on rates of mischief and disturbing the peace.

These results describe the situation of crime in Inuit Nunangat. Additional research will be necessary to better understand crime in these communities. In particular, an effort should be made to understand what combination of factors explains these high rates. More specifically, the extent to which crime may be influenced by alcohol, socio-economic context and social cohesion still needs to be determined.

5 Data sources and methodology

Since no reliable and complete information is available on the Aboriginal identity of the victims or perpetrators of crime (Kong and Beattie 2005), this study is based on a geographical definition of Inuit communities. The methodology for selecting communities in this study is adapted from that of Wilkins et al. (2008). That study reveals that the majority of Canada's Inuit live in one of 54 communities in Canada, and within these communities, Inuit account for almost 81% of the population. Using a cut-off of 33% of Inuit population out of a community's total population, Wilkins et al. (2008) calculated life expectancy estimates for all communities above this cut-off, which included all communities in Inuit Nunangat.

In the present study, we selected all communities within the four regions of Inuit Nunangat. All communities in the four regions meet the 33% cut-off used by Wilkins et al. (2008), which affirms the utility of the geographic approach, but we exclude Northwest River. In addition, based on data quality and availability, we exclude the community of Rigolet, in Nunatsiavut, and the entire region of Nunavik.

Besides looking at Inuit Nunangat by region, we also analyse patterns of reported crime based on community restrictions on alcohol. A number of communities in our study area have bylaws or other controls on the sale, distribution or possession of alcoholic beverages. This information, collected and maintained in the territorial Gazette of Nunavut and North West Territory, enables to identify Open communities (having no liquor restrictions) and Prohibited communities (having a full ban on liquor sale and/or possession).

Map 1
Communities in Inuit Nunangat, by region, Canada, 2006

Note: The communities of Nunavut are excluded from most of the analyses in this study.

Police-reported data come from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR 2.2), which collects detailed information on various criminal incidents reported to the police, including incident, accused and victim characteristics. These data are collected by police services. Homicide information are from the Homicide Survey, which collects police-reported data on the characteristics of all homicide incidents and accused.

Most Inuit Nunangat communities are served by only one police detachment. However, certain police services serve more than one Inuit-inhabited community. This is the case of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay detachment, which serves the Inuit community of Rigolet. This community has been excluded from the analysis of police-reported data because it was impossible to distinguish incidents reported in Rigolet from those reported in other communities serve by the same detachment.

Most analysis of police-reported data also excludes the Inuit Nunangat communities of Nunavik (Québec) because of data quality issues. Nunavik data is available from the Homicide Survey, and is included in calculations based on this database (which is noted in the text).

Three different rates are analyzed in this study: the crime rate, the rate of persons accused and the victimization rate. They represent the ratio between, respectively, the number of incidents, of persons accused, and of victims to total population. In this study, rates are the average of three years: 2006, 2007 and 2008. Population data are from population estimates for the same three years.

Of all police-reported violent incidents in Inuit Nunangat, 93% had information on at least one charged person and 91% had information on at least one victim. Information about the age of charged persons and victims might be approximations. Information on age was available for 93% of accused and 92% of victims in police-reported incidents in Inuit Nunangat.

Unless otherwise stated, the police-reported data used in this study include 4 communities in Nunatsiavut, 25 communities in Nunavut and 5 communities in Inuvialuit region. Moreover, the Territory of Nunavut is divided in three administrative regions: Qikiqtaaluk (13 communities), Kivalliq (7 communities) and Kitikmeot (5 communities).

Demographic and socio-economic data presented in this document are also from the 2006 Census.

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